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Hope on the Hill

01.24.2013 | Catholic, Campus and Community

When floodwaters struck Dayton in 1913, those who fled to high ground just south of where the waters crested at Apple Street found shelter, food and welcome from the Marianists at St. Mary's College, the school that became the University of Dayton.

During the Dayton community's commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the historic disaster, treasures from the University's archives will be on display including photos, a roster of the refugees written in their own hand, original film footage of the flood and a first-person oral history.

"The University rests on the foundation of the Society of Mary's commitment to serving the community," said Kathleen Webb, dean of University libraries. "Nowhere is that more evident than in these items that tell the story of how the St. Mary's College community opened wide its doors to take in and care for those who had been so terribly affected by the flood."

"Hope on the Hill: Marianists and the 1913 Dayton Flood" runs from Feb. 4 to June 17 on the second floor of Roesch Library on the University of Dayton campus. Because days and times vary, call 937-229-4094 or visit udayton.edu/libraries for a schedule and directions.

The exhibit highlights events during and after the disaster and the college's significant role in providing relief. *The Exponent*, a student magazine, reported on the college's efforts and published perspectives by students.

St. Mary's College was uniquely situated and equipped to provide relief to flood victims. Because students had not returned to campus from Easter break, the college was amply stocked with food and other provisions. Due to its location on the hill, electric light and heating plants were not affected, a plentiful clean water supply was available and the college had other essential facilities such as a laundry and infirmary.

In addition to meals for the refugees, the college's kitchen provided meals to Miami Valley Hospital, whose own kitchen had been crippled by the flood. And the college provided 12,000 pounds of provisions to St. Elizabeth Hospital.

The first night, 400 refugees took shelter at St. Mary's College; by the end of the week the number had grown to 600. All in all, the college assisted 800 refugees.

Accounts from *The Exponent*, photos, postcards and other memorabilia will be on display. Visitors can listen to an oral history from Marianist Brother Andy Weber describing what he saw from his window. Original flood footage from the University Archives' Glenn Walters Collection will also be on display.

Digitized materials from the collection will be available online by visiting the 1913 Flood Collection at digital.udayton.edu (url: <http://digital.udayton.edu/>).

The University's exhibit is part of a community-wide commemoration throughout the Miami Valley looking back at the flood and its lasting impact. For more on the commemorations, visit 1913flood.com (url: <http://1913flood.com/>).

For information, contact Katy Kelly, communications and outreach librarian, at 937-229-4274 or kkelly2@udayton.edu.